



ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

PART THREE

*Interstate School of Correspondence
Chicago*



Class PR 1105

Book 58
1901

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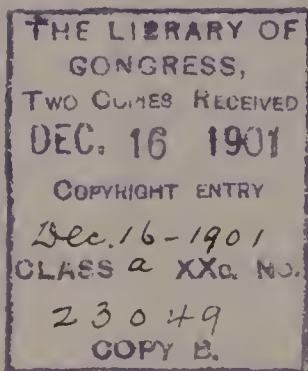
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Part Three

Essays

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Mastery of Thought

Mastery of Thought

People who read much fiction are apt to read rapidly and for general impressions. They do not try to exhaust the meaning of single passages but to gather a general idea from many. The very nature of a story not only makes this possible but really encourages it. The plot unfolds slowly and characters are frequently developed by slow degrees. At first the author may purposely restrict acquaintance with a character and no matter how closely a person reads, how deliberately he studies, he can not know more of the stranger till he reads on and meets him again and again. But as the reading proceeds, and the character is met frequently, he comes to be well known and understood, though the reader has passed over many words with whose meaning he was unfamiliar and has left whole sentences vague and obscure.

Such loose reading may be very entertaining and one may really gather the principal points of the story and absorb much of the author's message without any close or systematic study. Moreover, much that goes under the name of literature may be worthy of no more serious consideration. There are ephemera in literature, as well as among insects, and the warm days of summer may justify occasionally the light attention to the light

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book that entertains without effort on the part of the reader.

But reading that never rises above this level, reading that contents itself with general impressions and hazy concepts is usually vicious and not only deprives the mind of the choicest pleasures literature can give but gradually unfits it for careful consideration of serious questions.

The study of Part One of this course has shown many of the lines of thought that the reading of a classic may suggest but they are of a general nature and do not involve such close and critical examination as may profitably be given.

Real appreciation of literature is dependent on effort, and each acquired impression aids all others in proportion to its intensity. We can interpret only by what our minds already contain, so that the earlier years of one's reading are largely devoted to the acquirement of material for future use. In this way the myths and folk stories with which children fill their minds become the touchstones that enable them in later years to read with interest and judge accurately the literature that falls within their reach. The later one begins his reading, the more difficult it is for him to master the art. He has not the simplest standards of literary judgment nor even the ideas from which such standards are to be formed. Elegance of style and skill in the choice of words are entirely lost upon him as is the delicate meaning involved

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in the play of appropriate figures and in the brilliance of the pictures limned in colors to which his eye is blind. Such a person can come to enjoy the pleasures of literature but it is by way of a long and careful course of study, and it is probable that his appreciation will never be so keen as it would have been if he had gathered his literary stock in trade at the same time that his senses were first opening to the world. Then the skies and the flowers, the song of birds, and the hum of insects, the quiet reaches of still lakes, and the roaring surge, gave to him the sensations to which literature appeals.

There is no need for one to feel discouragement when at first he does not admire all that the critics say is beautiful, but prefers some of the simple things that he knew in his childhood. The critic is right from his point of view but there is merit, too, in the judgment of the humble reader. A person would hesitate to say the critic's judgment is the higher were it not for the fact that anyone reading carefully will find his tastes changing and constantly approximating higher standards. Each year brings him nearer to the critic's position and he sees excellence and is touched by beauty in selections that before have been devoid of any interest. It is to aid this growth in power of comprehension, this refinement of taste, that one reads.

THE AUTHOR.—When the study relates to a

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specific selection it is wise to create an interest by looking for all the contributory aids that can be found. Sometimes a knowledge of the life of the author or of the circumstances under which the selection was written will stimulate a desire to know what has been said and will moreover assist to make the meaning clear and to create the same sentiment that inspired the writer. To know that *Snow Bound* is a description of Whittier's own home, that the people about the fireside are his own parents, brother, sisters, and that he paints them [with a loving touch after all but the one brother have passed to the other side, is to make the poem appeal to our emotions with an intensity which the beautiful lines alone could not effect. *Ichabod* we read once, but when we know the meaning of its spiritual name and remember that it is Whittier's indignant rebuke of Webster for his vacillating policy in the slavery agitation, we read it again with a renewed and a more vivid interest. Many things, however, are so universal that one cares not whether they were written by a Hindoo or an American, whether they are full of personal experience or drawn with the fervor of the most ardent imagination. Wordsworth's *Daffodils* would charm us and our hearts would dance as joyfully if we knew nothing of the pensive poet of the English lakes.

WORDS.—A thorough mastery of the thought of any piece is an essential preliminary to any emo-

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tional enjoyment except such as comes to the ear from the rhythm and music of the lines. To secure such a mastery one must know all the words; not know them in the general and slipshod sense in which they are so frequently used, but know them in all the delicate shades of meaning or at least in the one most apt and appropriate for the special use made of the word. Oftentimes when one fails to see the beauty his friends profess to admire, it is because he fails to put into some one word the particular meaning for which it stood in the author's own mind. Wherever in his studies there is a vagueness or haziness in his understanding, a person should first determine whether the meaning he attaches to the words is the accurate and precise one.

SENTENCES.—The words alone are not a sufficient possession. They must be known in all their relations. A comprehension of the structure of the sentence is always necessary. A sentence is a unit of thought, an idea reduced to its lowest terms. It may not be necessary that each sentence be analyzed strictly by grammatical rules, but it is essential that the subject and predicate should occupy their places and the modifiers should rank themselves properly in respect to their importance. Even the practiced reader by unconsciously laying undue prominence upon some minor phrase, frequently modifies the meaning an author intends to convey. This is particu-

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larly true in verse where the poet, hemmed in by the rules that govern his meter and his rhyme, varies the natural order of the elements of a sentence to bring the accents where they belong or to throw the rhyming word to the end of a verse. The grouping of related sentences into paragraphs is an aid to the reader and should be noticed by him till the habit of expecting a slight change in thought with the indentation of a line becomes fixed and automatic.

ALLUSIONS.—But one may have the most perfect knowledge of all the words, his comprehension of the meaning of the sentence may be exact and full and yet the special thought which the expression carries may never reach his mind. Ruskin writes: “Gather a single blade of grass and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point—not a perfect point either, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared for example of Nature’s workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven; and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibers of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong

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and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food — stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine — there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced as that narrow point of feeble green.” Words and sentences are all plain and simple and clear. Perhaps we pause a moment at “scented citron” for the citron as we know it is a vine bearing a melon-like fruit and we are not aware that it is especially fragrant. But this is another plant — a tree that bears a sweet-scented fruit not unlike the lemon. “Burdened vine” seems a trifle obscure — why *burdened* vine? A vine carrying a weight? What weight? The ripened clusters of purple fruit bending the swaying vines to the warm earth while autumn tints the leaves to harmonious colors. “Burdened vine” is a suggestive expression indeed to the person of a little imagination who has walked through the long aisles of a thriving vineyard. Is the passage now clear to us and perfectly understood? Does it convey to us what Ruskin really thought? — “Tomorrow to be cast into the oven.” What a strange expression! Do we put grass into an oven? How came Ruskin to mention such a thing? “To be cast into the oven.” We have seen “burdened vines” and we understand the “scented citron” but what of this grass “cast into the oven”? Back in the mind of the artist-critic lie the lessons of his childhood when an

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ambitious father and a strict mother intended him for the church and trained him carefully to a close and accurate knowledge of the scriptures. So when he writes of the grass of the field he almost unconsciously uses the language of the bible: "Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" We his readers interpret his feelings and his meaning in this, only as we have learned the same lessons.

Examples of such allusions abound throughout literature. In *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, Lowell says :—

"Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not."

With a knowledge of geography we might locate the mountain and understand the sentence, but the tremendous power of the lines can never be felt unless we know the story of Moses and so realize that we stand every day like the patriarch of old in the very presence of God himself.

The mythology of Greece and Rome furnishes to English Literature allusions so pointed, so vivid, and so full of beautiful suggestion that a knowledge of the myths is necessary to any real culture. Modern writers do not make such ready use of them as did the older schools, but Lowell and Tennyson, Browning and Arnold, and a host

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of minor writers assume that their readers know as their alphabet the stories of mythology. In his hymn *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, Milton has this stanza following one which tells that the shepherds heard the sweet music, —

“Nature that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.”

How little of intelligent interest attaches to the first three lines if one has no knowledge beyond the literal meaning of the phrases. “The hollow round of Cynthia's seat” has beauty for that person only who knows something of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy and of the huntress-queen of Greek mythology.

Allusions lead one to every department of knowledge and are the result of the early training and experience of the author. No one needs to be told that Milton studied the classics, that Ruskin and Tennyson read the bible devotedly, that Shakespeare passed his early life in the country. The unconscious trend of their thought as shown by their allusions gives that information most distinctly. If a man loves history in his youth his

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writings will be filled with historical allusions; if he is a devotee of science one will find the phenomena of nature the source of his illustrations. The reader must be ready to understand and feelingly interpret these allusions no matter what the particular bent of the author. To the student the allusion is often very difficult of comprehension, for if it comes in the way of an ingenious paraphrase he may pass over it without the slightest recognition. When it is direct, a dictionary or other reference book will frequently make it sufficiently clear.

BASIS OF FIGURES.—The allusion is but one of many ways in which an author varies the literal meaning of his sentences and gives more than force or beauty to his statements. There are a large number of different figures of speech but such fine distinctions as the rhetoricians make are unnecessary for the ordinary student of literature. It is the meaning the figures convey that concerns us, for an adept in reading always notices the skillful use of figures and his pleasure is heightened by their delicacy and beauty.

In the study of figures one must first carefully determine the basis in reality or the literal meaning and then the figurative or applied meaning. Browning speaks of—

“—selfish worthless human slugs whose slime
Has failed to lubricate their path in life.”

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Here the reader must see disgusting slugs or snails crawling lazily across the ripening apples in the orchard and leaving behind them the filthy streak of slime with which they made the way easy for their ugly bodies, but in so doing defiled the fruit for human use. So much is the basis in fact. Knowing this one can feel the poet's stinging denunciation of the one who cast the beautiful girl in the way of the heartless Guido instead of "putting a prompt foot on him the worthless human slug."

"To unhusk truth a-hiding in its hulls."

Here Browning has gone to the fields for his figure and we shall see the ripened grain, the corn or the wheat, the merry huskers at work upon it, turning out the glowing ear from its covering of dim paper wraps; or perchance a group of disciples walking with their Master and rubbing the hulls from the wheat gathered on the Sabbath day. Whatever the scene that comes in mind, one fact there is,—underneath the dried and worthless hulls lies the living and life-giving grain. So we find truth bright and genuine when we have torn from it the coverings with which it has been concealed.

Such practice as this in working out elaborately the figure often given in barest hint, strengthens the imagination and gives to thought the versatility that makes reading a delight

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and an inspiration. Till the imagination is furnished material and given freedom, literature is as worthless as the husks.

SIMILE.—As we learn to know one thing from its likeness to another, it is natural that the writer should seek to make impressions vivid by comparison with better known things. Sometimes these comparisons are expressed in words and one thing is said to be *like* another, while at other times the comparison is left to be inferred and one thing is said *to be* another. The *simile* states the likeness. Browning seeks to make us see vividly the hideous character of one of his villains and says that on his very face you could read his crimes—

“Large-lettered like Hell’s masterpiece of print.”

The comparison “like Hell’s masterpiece” is a simile.

Turn to Part One and find five similes in *The Ancient Mariner*. Find as many more in *Enoch Arden*. Find two in each of the prose tales. Study each simile carefully, and state the exact meaning of each literally. Compare your statement with the figurative one and see if the latter is clearer, more forcible, or more beautiful. If any one of the similes seems less vivid than your own literal statement, ask yourself if the fault is your own in that you are not thoroughly familiar

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with the basis of the figure. Watch for similes in your reading and give them critical thought when you have found them. It is not necessary that your judgment should be unassailable. The value of the proceeding lies in the exercise of your attention and reason. Your judgments will improve, your appreciation grow keener and more delicate.

METAPHOR.—

“ Everywhere
I see in the world the intellect of man,
That sword, the energy, his subtle spear,
The knowledge, which defends him like a shield.”

Here is another quotation from Browning in which he says intellect is a sword and energy a spear thereby assuming a comparison and using the figure *metaphor* while in the last line he uses the simile “like a shield.” Ingersoll calls the grave “the windowless palace of rest” and Whittier refers to it in a beautiful metaphor as “the low green tent whose curtain never outward swings.”

Now return to the selections in Part One and find ten good metaphors, remembering the distinction between metaphor and simile. “The Lord is my shepherd” is a metaphor; “The Lord is like a shepherd” is a simile. When you have found your ten metaphors, reconstruct the sentences in which they occur, expressing the idea in similes. When

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this is done, change them again, this time into literal language.

SYNECDOCHE AND METONYMY.—Another group of figures is based upon the relation of one thing to another as of a part to a whole. When Browning says “pert tongue and idle ear consort ’neath the archway” he conveys the idea that idle gossips gather beneath the archway and with sharp tongues talk over the failings of their neighbors. This figure wherein he uses the ear and the tongue, parts of the body, to signify the person is called *synecdoche*. When the figure consists of an interchange of correlative terms it is called *metonymy*. Within the space of a few lines we can find Browning using these expressions, “naked truth;” “hobbling bedward,” to indicate an old man nearing death; “I could spill this overplus of my life,” meaning that he could die. Each of these is a metonymy and gives brilliancy of meaning by the use of a term usually applied to something else. The figure lies in the use of the words “naked,” “bedward,” and “spill.”

Our everyday language is full of these figures. We speak of owning “twenty head” of cattle, of hiring “ten hands,” of seeing “fifteen sails.” We mean that we own twenty cattle, that we hire ten men, that we see fifteen boats. By *synecdoche* we have used the name of a part of an object to represent the whole. The metonymy is frequently in use by the ignorant who have few

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words to express their meaning. In this way we may imagine a cowboy calling a stranger from the eastern states a "shorthorn" and a British horseman in Bombay might call an Australian visitor a "waler."

Search for examples of these two figures in the selections of Part One. Both are elusive and at first you are apt to pass over many without noticing them. As you continue your search and grow keen in it you will be surprised to see how common they are, both in what you read and in your own speech.

APOSTROPHE AND PERSONIFICATION.—A direct address to a person or thing is called an *apostrophe*, and when an inanimate object is assumed to be alive or an animate object is assumed to be raised to a higher plane of existence it is said to be by *personification*. Examples of the latter figure culled from the same source are "death's menace," "laugh of morn." In the line "Lucidity of soul unlocks the lips" are both metonymy and personification. In the same poem that has furnished us so many illustrations is the beautiful apostrophe beginning —

"O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,

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Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their
 blue
And bared them of the glory — to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice; can thy soul know
 change ? ”

Another fine example is found in Whittier's *Snow Bound*, the lyric which we print in another place and which begins,—

“ O Time and Change.”

“ Roll on, thou dark and deep blue ocean, roll ”
is the beginning of a grand apostrophe by Lord Byron.

We have considered the most common and expressive figures, and if one accustoms himself to the recognition of these and an explanation of their meaning as has been indicated here, he will soon recognize others of more complex type. Mere classification is valueless ; our purpose is to learn to see and to feel more clearly and more deeply by means of our intelligent grasp upon these figurative expressions.

Thought, then, is mastered by attention to the details we have discussed and until we habitually notice these things our reading is apt to be slipshod and profitless. It will help to retain these

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facts in mind if we put them into a systematic outline.

Mastery of thought, which is at the foundation of an appreciation of literature, depends upon mastery of —

- I. Words in their special meaning.
- II. Allusions, or references to
 1. Historical events and personages.
 2. Literary masterpieces.
 3. Scientific truths.
 4. Biblical events and principles.
 5. Mythological creations.
- III. Figures, of which the more important and common are those —
 1. Based on comparisons.
 - a. simile.
 - b. metaphor.
 2. Based on relations.
 - a. synecdoche.
 - b. metonymy.
 3. Of apostrophe.
 4. Of personification.
- IV. Sentences, the units of thought.
- V. Paragraphs, the collections of related thought units.

Essays

Essays

Essays deal with all subjects and in such a variety of ways that any attempt to classify them meets with difficulty. Originally an essay was an attempt, a mere outline or plan intended to be filled out at greater length or to be used in different form. It is in this sense that Bacon uses the word and his essays are condensed to the highest degree. In later years essays have come to be of the most highly finished type of literature and some of the most beautiful passages, the noblest thoughts, the most inspiring utterances, are to be found in them. Almost every conceivable topic is treated—there are biographical essays which do little more than narrate the facts of a man's life; there are descriptive essays whose only function is to make their readers see something as the author saw it; there are argumentative and didactic essays and essays on science, art, religion, and literary criticism. Some writers have given their whole time and attention to this form of composition and the modern magazine has become their distributing agency. Much of the deepest, of the brightest, of the best of recent work has come to its readers through this medium.

The essay shows more of the author's self than any other form of literature. It is apt to be sin-

Essays

cere, to be the deliberate expression of the writer's own views formulated with the desire to convince another. In the purely literary type this last characteristic is not so strikingly prominent though it appears rather under the surface. In no form of literature is the artistic element more manifest. The prose writer makes of his essay what the poet does of his lyric—the most finished and beautiful expression of his thought. The thought is the writer's chief concern, but upon his manner of expressing it depends the force and value of his work. Accordingly he gives to his style his most careful attention and fits and polishes it with all his skill. The result is that in the essay are to be found the best examples of prose style. While the essay frequently appeals to our humorous sense and sometimes arouses our sympathy and grief by its pathetic touches, yet no such opportunity is offered for emotional effect as that given by the novel or the drama. Therefore, the most prominent characteristics of style would naturally be clearness and simplicity, for those are the qualities that are most helpful in conveying thought.

Any satisfactory study of the essay, then, must begin with the thought, and here one is aided by the divisions made in the structure of the essay. If it is divided into chapters or sections the main divisions are apparent. If not, the reader must depend upon the paragraphs which naturally

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group themselves into the larger divisions. In the analysis of the paragraph the reader may usually expect to find at the first some intimation of the topic treated. The sentences are usually arranged in order of importance, the last containing the summary of the thought or being the most important if the sentences are a series.

Of Expense
Of Nature in Men
Of Studies

SIR FRANCIS BACON

Of Expense

Riches are for spending, and spending for honor and good actions; therefore extraordinary¹ expense must be limited by the worth² of the occasion; for voluntary undoing may be as well for a man's country as for the kingdom of heaven; but ordinary expense ought to be limited by a man's estate, and governed with such regard, as it be within his compass;³ and not subject to deceit and abuse of servants; and ordered to the best show,⁴ that the bills may be less than the estimation⁵ abroad. Certainly, if a man will keep but of even hand, his ordinary expenses ought to be but to the half of his receipts; and if he think to wax rich, but to the third part.

It is no baseness⁶ for the greatest to descend and look into their own estate.⁷ Some forbear⁸ it, not upon negligence alone, but doubt-

1. Unusual.

2. Importance.

3. Reach.

4. Managed so as to receive the best returns for the money.

5. Opinion.

6. Degradation.

7. Examine the condition of their own property.

8. Give no heed to.

Of Expense

ing to bring themselves into melancholy, in respect they shall find it broken: but wounds can not be cured without searching. He that can not look into his own estate at all, had need both choose well those whom he employeth, and change them often; for new are more timorous and less subtle. He that can look into his estate but seldom, it behoveth him to turn all to certainties.

A man had need, if he be plentiful in some kind of expense, to be as saving again in some other; as if he be plentiful in diet, to be saving in apparel: if he be plentiful in the hall, to be saving in the stable: and the like. For he that is plentiful in expenses of all kinds will hardly be preserved from decay.

In clearing⁹ of a man's estate, he may as well hurt himself in being too sudden, as in letting it run on too long; for hasty selling is commonly as disadvantageable¹⁰ as interest. Besides, he that clears at once will relapse; for finding himself out of straits, he will revert to his customs: but he that cleareth by degrees induceth a habit of frugality, and gaineth as well upon his mind as upon his estate. Certainly, who hath a state to repair, may not

9. Freeing it from debts.

10. Disadvantageous.

Of Expense

despise small things; and, commonly, it is less dishonorable to abridge petty charges than to stoop to petty gettings. A man ought warily to begin charges,¹¹ which once begun will continue: but in matters that return not, he may be more magnificent.

Having read the essay carefully we notice that each sentence is fraught with meaning, that there are few if any redundant words and that the sentences practically mark the paragraphs, as we understand the word. Analyzed, the main thought appears to be: Ordinary expenses should be regulated by the income and be carefully guarded. This is brought out by a chain of statements or series of maxims that might be put in this form:

I. Ordinary expenses should be limited by the importance of the occasion.

II. Expenses must not exceed one-half the receipts if you would keep even, nor exceed one-third if you would accumulate wealth.

III. Give personal attention to your own property.

IV. If you spend freely in one direction, economize in some other.

V. Free your estate from debts slowly.

VI. Economize in small things.

VII. Beware of expenses that continue.

Running parallel with this main course of

¹¹. Expenses.

Of Expense

thought is a series of secondary statements in which Bacon gives us corollaries of the chief truths and the reasons upon which the truths are based. It is a difficult matter to make the essay more compact than it is but the following outline may serve to make it clearer : —

OF EXPENSE.

I. Limit Expense.

Extraordinary.

Purpose — Country and God.

Unlimited.

Ordinary.

Purpose — Comfort and show.

Limitation — Well within estate.

Amount.

For common prudence, one-half receipts.

For wealth, one-third receipts.

II. Manage Estate.

Care of

Personal — fearing no discovery.

If impossible

Choose servants carefully.

Change them frequently.

If but rarely possible

Deal with no speculations.

Clearance from debts.

Slow because

Hasty selling is disadvantageous.

Might relapse into extravagance.

Of Expense

It fixes habits of economy.

Attend to small matters.

III. Beware of expenses that are continuous.

Determine whether the above outline is just and fair in its proportions, whether the chief ideas have been selected and put forth and the secondary ideas properly subordinated. When you have thoroughly accomplished this begin the study of the next.

Of Nature in Men

Nature is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished. Force maketh nature more violent in the return; doctrine and discourse maketh nature less importune;¹ but custom only doth alter and subdue nature.

He that seeketh victory over his nature, let him not set himself too great nor too small tasks: for the first will make him dejected by often failings, and the second will make him a small proceeder, though by often prevailings; and at the first, let him practice with helps, as swimmers do with bladders, or rushes; but, after a time, let him practice with disadvantage, as dancers do with thick shoes; for it breeds great perfection, if the practice be harder than the use. Where nature is mighty, and therefore the victory hard, the degrees had need be, first to stay and arrest nature in time; like to him that would say over the four and twenty letters when he was angry, then to go less in quantity: as if one should, in forbearing wine, come from drinking healths to a draught at a meal; and lastly, to discontinue

1. Troublesome.

Of Nature in Men

altogether: but if a man have the fortitude and resolution to enfranchise himself at once, that is the best: —

“Optimus ille animi vindex lædentia pectus
Vincula qui rupit, dedoluitque semel.”²

Neither is the ancient rule amiss, to bend nature as a wand to a contrary extreme, whereby to set it right; understanding it where the contrary extreme is no vice.

Let not a man force a habit upon himself with a perpetual continuance; but with some intermission: for both the pause reinforceth the new onset; and if a man that is not perfect, be ever in practice, he shall as well practice his errors as his abilities, and induce one habit of both; and there is no means to help this but by seasonable intermission; but let not a man trust his victory over his nature too far; for nature will lie buried a great time, and yet revive upon the occasion, or temptation; like as it was with Æsop's damsel, turned from a cat to a woman, who sat very demurely at the board's end till a mouse ran before her: therefore, let a man either avoid the occasion altogether, or put himself often to it, that he may be little moved with it.

2. He best asserts the freedom of his mind who bursts the chains that gall his breast and at the same time ceases to grieve.

Of Nature in Men

A man's nature is best perceived in privateness, for there is no affectation; in passion, for that putteth a man out of his precepts; and in a new case or experiment, for there custom leaveth him. They are happy men whose natures sort with their vocations; otherwise they may say, "Multum incola fuit anima mea,"³ when they converse in those things they do not affect.⁴

In studies, whatsoever a man commandeth upon himself, let him set hours for it; but whatsoever is agreeable to his nature, let him take no care for any set times; for his thoughts will fly to it of themselves, so as the spaces of other business or studies will suffice. A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one, and destroy the other.

Now make as careful and minute an outline of the thought in this as was made in the essay *Of Expense*. In doing so answer the following questions: —

What is the central thought in the first paragraph? In the second? Are the two paragraphs related in thought? Is the connection close?

3. My soul has been long a sojourner — that is, never peaceful and content.

4. Enjoy.

Of Nature in Men

Does one follow from the other? What is the chief thought in the third paragraph? Is this connected with the others? If so, in what does the relation consist? What is the central thought in the fourth paragraph? In what way, if any, is this related to the others? Is the last sentence a natural conclusion to the essay? What is the chief thought of the entire essay? Is there a marked unity or coherence throughout, does the author keep close to his subject, human nature, the nature of man?

Is the arrangement logical, that is, does one thought lead to another? In making the outline do you find it difficult at any time to determine which is the principal and which a subordinate idea?

Is the essay convincing? Do you feel that the author has established his points, or has he rested content with a bare statement of fact? Do you call either of these essays or the one following beautiful? Has Bacon tried to ornament his work? What figures mentioned in the early part of this number has he resorted to? What is his purpose in using the phrase "as swimmers do with bladders"? What is the effect of "as a wand"? What is meant by "Æsop's damsel"?

Of Studies

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring: for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one: but the general counsels, and the plots and marshaling of affairs come best from those that are learned.

To spend too much time in studies is sloth: to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar; they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proying by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience.

Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a

NOTE. Several words in this essay have changed their meaning since the time of Bacon or are used in a different sense than that to which we are accustomed. Look up the words "humor," "crafty," "simple," "admire," "curiously," "present," and "witty."

Of Studies

wisdom, without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse: but to weigh and consider.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things.

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.

Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtile; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: "Abeunt studia in mores;"¹ nay, there

1. Studies make themselves manifest in the manners.

Of Studies

is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the reins; shooting, for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics: for in demonstrations, his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish, or find differences, let him study the schoolmen;² for they are "cymini sectores."³ If he be not apt to beat over matters and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyer's cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

While we see in the preceding examples that truths are illustrated and made more effective by the use of allusions and other figurative expressions, yet those figures have not been so beautiful as they have been clear and strong. Bacon's manifest intent is to present truth in the clearest and most effective manner, and that means directness and simplicity of style.

2. The philosophers and divines of the Middle Ages who gave much of their time to fine distinctions in abstract speculations.

"He could distinguish and divide a hair 'twixt south and southwest side."

3. We use the phrase "hair-splitting."

Sir Francis Bacon



Sir Francis Bacon

1561-1626

“The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.”

In the brilliant age of Queen Elizabeth the name of Bacon is second to that of Shakespeare only. Born of cultured parents and related closely to nobility, he had in youth all the advantages the age afforded. His precocious intellect enabled him to profit at once by the instruction he received, so that at thirteen years of age he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. At sixteen he visited Paris and saw the world of fashion and diplomacy in that brilliant capital. At the death of his father he returned to England and began the study of law. His progress was rapid and under King James it was phenomenal. Advanced from one position of favor to another, he did not rest until he had been appointed Lord High Chancellor of England and made Viscount St. Albans. He was extravagant in his tastes and expended much more than his large income. If his rise was rapid his fall was sudden, complete, and disgraceful. Before the House of Lords he was accused of accepting bribes and unable to clear himself, he confessed to numerous offenses. He was subjected to a heavy fine, deprived of all his offices, made ineligible to future preferment, and

Sir Francis Bacon

sentenced to imprisonment at the King's pleasure. Though he was subsequently pardoned, he never regained his power or influence.

It was as an author and a philosopher that he achieved his greatest distinction. His extraordinary intellect early saw the weakness of the system of philosophy taught in the universities, and he set for himself the gigantic task of destroying the old and creating a new. His task was too great for the life of one man, but "he passed a sponge over the table of human knowledge and propounded enough of his new philosophy to place his name with those of Plato and Aristotle." In a certain sense he fell a martyr to his own love for science, as his fatal illness was contracted in an experiment to see if snow had not for flesh the same preservative power that salt possessed.

As an author his chief contribution to English literature is his little volume of fifty-eight essays treating of a variety of subjects. These essays are replete with meaning and worthy of frequently repeated reading for so condensed are they that one can not at the first perusal appreciate their wealth of thought and vigor of expression. Emerson calls them "a little bible of earthly wisdom." Dugald Stewart, the famous Scotch metaphysician declares, "They may be read from beginning to end in a few hours; and yet, after the twentieth perusal, one seldom fails to remark in them something unobserved before." Burke

Sir Francis Bacon

says, “Who is there that upon hearing the name of Lord Bacon does not instantly recognize everything of genius the most profound, everything of literature the most extensive, everything of discovery the most penetrating, everything of observation of human life the most distinguishing and refined ?”

Dream Children: A Revery

CHARLES LAMB

Dream Children: A Reverie

Children love to listen to stories about their elders when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditional great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field,¹ who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall,² the whole story down to the Robin Redbreast; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble

1. Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, was for a long time housekeeper in one of the great English country houses but not in the county alluded to in the text. It is not known how much of the allusion to the chimney-piece of this house is pure fancy.

2. One of Lamb's fancies — the real chimney-carving represented stag and boar hunts.

Dream Children: A Revery

one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey,³ and stick them up in Lady's C.'s tawdry gilt drawing room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was at-

3. Westminster Abbey.

Dream Children: A Reverie

tended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles around, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, gracious person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer,—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted,—the best dancer, I was saying, in the country, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said “those innocents would do her no harm;” and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she,—

Dream Children: A Reverie

and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out,—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me,—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at,—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me,—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along

Dream Children: A Revery

with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth,—or in watching the dace that darted to and from the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings;—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——,⁴ because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the country in a morning, and join the hunters

4. Lamb's brother John — twelve years his senior. John was rather a lazy, selfish fellow — at least he never gave up his own pleasures and comforts to assist his family even in their gravest need.

Dream Children: A Reverie

when there were any out,—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries,—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than I—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died,⁵ though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death, as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and

5. John Lamb died just before this essay was written.

Dream Children: A Reverv

wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how, for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n;⁶ and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens,—when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance,

6. It is not known positively whether Alice Warren was a real or an imaginary character. It is related that Lamb gave up an early and ardent attachment in order to devote himself to his sister.

Dream Children: A Reverie

which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: “We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name;”——and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget⁷ unchanged by my side,—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

7. Bridget Elia is his sister, Mary Lamb.

Study of Dream Children

Study of Dream Children

To this essay there is a brief introduction in which Lamb tells what children enjoy and informs us that his have gathered about him to hear a story of his own boyhood.

By a skillful touch he associates the story with the thoughts of his children. They have been reading *Babes in the Wood* and so he imagines the incidents of that story carved on the chimney-piece in the old mansion and with this as a starting point he rambles on in a most delightful way all in keeping with the peculiar traits of his own disposition, bringing in his grandmother, her charming character and great popularity, her bravery and his own timidity, her love for children and his own pleasures in the galleries, rooms and gardens of the great house. Then he introduces his brother as the prime favorite of his grandmother, pays tribute to the good qualities of John Lamb and mourns his death, so recent that he is unaccustomed to the loss. The story is now too mournful and the tale shifts to that of his own devotion to the mother of the children which in its turn gives way to the stern reality of his brother's death. This is the fitting conclusion to the touching revery.

But this essay contains much more than the

Study of Dream Children

bare thought just given above. It is full of beauty and emotion, two characteristics not at all prominent in anything seen from Bacon's pen, and it creates a living human interest in the children.

The first sentence tells us that here is a sketch in which our imagination can have full play. We will be like children ourselves and see the father by his fireside, the boy and girl leaning tenderly on the arm of his chair. As the sketch progresses the children show little traits of character that make them very real to us. Alice puts on a look of tender reproach when the fine old mantel is torn down, a look borrowed from her mother whom we now know to be gone. When she is told how rich her grandmother was in Bible lore Alice "spread her hands." What does this little gesture mean? Does she hold them aloft and spread them in amazement at the extent of the knowledge or does she spread them on her lap in a self-satisfied way because she herself knows nearly as much? Alice taps her foot gently when the dancing is described and we feel her childish love of life and action. She is willing to share the grapes with John though she would never have dreamed of taking them herself. She weeps for the dead uncle and when she hears the story of her father's love she becomes so much a woman and so much like her dead mother that the dreamer is confused. She is essentially feminine, a

Study of Dream Children

woman in miniature as real, and living as though Lamb had taken pages to describe what his magic shows in so few simple statements. But John is as perfect a boy as Alice is a girl and his picture has required no more strokes of the pen. He condemns as foolish the moving of the chimney-piece, he tries to look courageous when the ghosts are mentioned, he slyly puts back the grapes when he learns that they are common baits for children, and he joins Alice in her sorrow for the dear uncle. How little is said, how much suggested! If in this essay one read for the *thought* alone, how much would be lost to him! It is high art indeed when a writer can weave in skillfully the threads that make so vivid a part of the completed piece.

Till the last paragraph there is nothing to make us question the reality of the scene but the one word in the title. Then how gracefully the announcement is made, how beautifully the whole scene changes as the children fade from sight, leaving their last pathetic message, and he finds himself again the bachelor sitting there with his sister, Mary Lamb, for whose sake he has, perhaps, forever given up the possibility of home and family. A more beautiful sketch it is difficult to imagine and a more delicately sympathetic style is not easily found.

Consider, too, the play of emotions shown in the sketch, which shows that the essay is to prose

Study of Dream Children

what the lyric is to poetry. This is a lyric of love,—love of a father for his children, of children for father; strong, manly, brotherly love; the absorbing, the eternal passion of a man for his wife, and underlying it all, as we know from the author's life, the passionate life-long devotion of a brother for a sister.

Charles Lamb



Charles Lamb

1775-1834

The essays of Charles Lamb are different in character from any others afforded in the range of English literature, and one appreciates more thoroughly the striking personality that is always apparent in them if he knows the pathetic story of the author's life. De Quincey says, "The syllables lurk up and down the writings of Charles Lamb which decipher his eccentric nature. His character lies there dispersed in anagrams."

He was a junior clerk in a government office, and barely twenty years of age when his sister Mary was one day, just before their dinner hour, seized with a sudden fit of insanity. She ran about the room throwing the forks and, seizing a case knife, stabbed her mother, who died instantly. Charles Lamb was just in time to wrench the knife away and save the life of his father, who had been wounded in the head by one of the flying forks. Mary was sent to the asylum where she soon recovered and fully understood what she had done. Lamb asked that she might be given him to care for, and after much persuasion this request was granted and for nearly forty years they lived together. His love for her is best expressed in his own language: "I am a fool bereft of her co-operation. I am used to look up to her in the

Charles Lamb

worst and biggest perplexities. To say all that I find her would be more than I think anybody could possibly understand. She is older, wiser, and better than I am, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death with me." This was written while she was suffering from one of those wild attacks which recurred at frequent intervals.

There is no more pathetic picture than that of Charles and Mary Lamb going about in their everyday occupation with this terrible specter haunting them. She learned to recognize the approach of her attacks, and was often seen with her brother going toward the asylum for temporary refuge. She was so violent that they carried with them a strait-jacket in which she could be placed for self-protection. But in spite of all this she worked with him and aided materially in writing those *Tales from Shakespeare* which are as popular to-day as when they were written. De Quincey says, "The whole range of history scarcely presents a more affecting spectacle of perpetual sorrow, humiliation or conflict, and one that was supported to the end,—that is, for forty years, with more resignation and with more absolute victory."

In personal appearance Lamb was somewhat peculiar. He usually dressed in a black suit with knickerbockers, black gaiters, rustic and old-

Charles Lamb

fashioned, but always neat and well brushed. His body was small and spare, resting on two "immaterial legs," as Thomas Hood called them. His head was large and his face full of many lines, intelligent and expressive. He had a hooked nose, a decided mouth, always wearing a quaint and quizzical expression; but the strongest feature was his eyes, turning, glittering as though they "would pick up pins and needles."

"Lamb's character is a sacred one with me. No associations that he may form can hurt the purity of his mind. . . . Nothing ever left a stain on that gentle creature's mind. . . . All things are shadows to him except those which move his convictions," is the estimate of Coleridge, his life-long friend. Though twice Lamb speaks somewhat slightly of Coleridge saying that he was "an archangel a little damaged," and later, "bless you, old sophist, who next to human nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing," yet Lamb seems never to have recovered from the blow he felt in the death of his friend. He says: "Since I feel how great a part he was of me his great and dear spirit haunts me. I can not think a thought, I can not make a criticism on men or books without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. . . . He was my fifty years old friend without a dissension. I seem to love the house he died at more passionately than when he died. . . . What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel."

Charles Lamb

Lamb was a very witty and entertaining talker and the wretched stammering to which he was subject seemed only to add to the quaintness of his remarks. A lady after expressing her rapturous love for her children turned enthusiastically to Lamb and asked, "And how do you like babies, Mr. Lamb?" "Bu-bu-boiled, ma'am!" was his humorous answer. Hood says, "A clever fellow certainly, but full of villainous and abortive puns which he miscarries every minute." "The best acid is acidity" is one of his noted puns. "No work is worse than overwork. The mind preys on itself," he said at one time. And again, "Voltaire was a very good Jesus Christ—for the French." To a man with dirty hands, "Oh, Martin! if dirt were trumps what a hand you'd hold!"

"Through the cloudy medium of language which always hangs as a curtain between reader and author we see glimpses of the real man, his shape and color, even his gait and manner. He takes the reader by the button as he would his friend and pours out upon him a current of delightful humor and fine mental oddities almost too delicate to be seen by vulgar eye. . . . He in truth seems to be only thinking aloud, and we are behind the tapestry listening." This characterization taken from Fitzgerald indicates perfectly the familiar and charming style of the essays from which have been selected typical and most entertaining examples.

Charles Lamb

Lamb was never strong physically, and after his long life, during which he was the only support for his imbecile father and erratic sister, he faded quickly away under a disease that set in after a slight accident which happened to him while walking. His sister survived him for some years, cared for by his friends.

The remaining essay by Charles Lamb should now attract you. Find wit and humor, beauty in thought and in execution, sympathetic interest and other marks of emotional strength. Read them more than once, for much of their beauty is so delicate and elusive that no one can appreciate it as he reads it for the first time. Each essay is a picture which will repay frequent study and many a subsequent hasty glance.

A Dissertation upon Roast Pig
The Praise of Chimney Sweepers

CHARLES LAMB

A Dissertation upon Roast Pig

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother), was accidentally discovered in the manner following: The swinehead, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son, Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngsters of his age commonly are, let some

NOTE.—A friend who had traveled extensively in China and Thibet told Lamb this story of the origin of cooking. We do not know that the friend found the story current in China but we are certain that it is found in very old writings. Of course the quaint, fanciful form of the story is Lamb's own.

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sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, not less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest period that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage,—he had smelt that smell before,—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening

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at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted — *crackling* ! Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he

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might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued :

“ You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog’s tricks, and be hanged to you ! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what ; what have you got there, I say ? ”

“ O father, the pig, the pig ! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats.”

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting, “ Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste ; O Lord ! ” — with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether

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he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretense, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess and never left off until they had dispatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the ter-

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rible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present,—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fire in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all

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over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later; I forget in whose dynasty. * * * * Thus do the most useful arts make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*,¹ I will maintain it to be the most delicate — *princeps obsoniorum*.²

1. Eatable world.

2. Chief of viands.

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I speak not of your grown porkers — things between pig and pork — those hobbydehoys — but a young and tender suckling — under a moon old — guiltless as yet of the sty — with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*,³ the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest — his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble — the mild forerunner, or *prælude*⁴ of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled, — but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called, — the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance, — with the adhesive oleaginous — O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it, — the tender blossoming of fat — fat cropped in the bud — taken in the shoot — in the first innocence — the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food, — the lean, no

3. Love of filth.

4. Prelude.

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lean, but a kind of animal manna,—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is “doing”—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars.

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation,—from these sins he is happily snatched away,—

Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care —²

his memory is odoriferous,—no clown curs-eth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon,—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reek-

5. From Coleridge's *Epitaph on an Infant*.

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ing sausages, — he hath a fair sepulcher in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure, — and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of savors. Pineapple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent — a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning that really a tender conscienced person would do well to pause — too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her — like lovers' kisses, she biteth — she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish — but she stoppeth at the palate — she meddleth not with the appetite — and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig — let me speak his praise — is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably inter-twisted, and not to be unraveled without hazard, he is — good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbor's fare.

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I am one of those, who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens, (those "tame villatic fowl,") capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightingly, (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what,) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate — it argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience of this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum cake fresh from the

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oven. In my way to school (it was over London bridge) a grayheaded old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy-like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake,—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her,—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present!—and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last,—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-

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giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipped to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*,⁶) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified

6. By a terrible beating.

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in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread-crumbs done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But vanish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue you whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are,—but consider, he is a weakling — a flower.

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tional enjoyment except such as comes to the ear from the rhythm and music of the lines. To secure such a mastery one must know all the words; not know them in the general and slipshod sense in which they are so frequently used, but know them in all the delicate shades of meaning or at least in the one most apt and appropriate for the special use made of the word. Oftentimes when one fails to see the beauty his friends profess to admire, it is because he fails to put into some one word the particular meaning for which it stood in the author's own mind. Wherever in his studies there is a vagueness or haziness in his understanding, a person should first determine whether the meaning he attaches to the words is the accurate and precise one.

SENTENCES.—The words alone are not a sufficient possession. They must be known in all their relations. A comprehension of the structure of the sentence is always necessary. A sentence is a unit of thought, an idea reduced to its lowest terms. It may not be necessary that each sentence be analyzed strictly by grammatical rules, but it is essential that the subject and predicate should occupy their places and the modifiers should rank themselves properly in respect to their importance. Even the practiced reader by unconsciously laying undue prominence upon some minor phrase, frequently modifies the meaning an author intends to convey. This is particu-

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larly true in verse where the poet, hemmed in by the rules that govern his meter and his rhyme, varies the natural order of the elements of a sentence to bring the accents where they belong or to throw the rhyming word to the end of a verse. The grouping of related sentences into paragraphs is an aid to the reader and should be noticed by him till the habit of expecting a slight change in thought with the indentation of a line becomes fixed and automatic.

ALLUSIONS.—But one may have the most perfect knowledge of all the words, his comprehension of the meaning of the sentence may be exact and full and yet the special thought which the expression carries may never reach his mind. Ruskin writes: “Gather a single blade of grass and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point—not a perfect point either, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared for example of Nature’s workmanship; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven; and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibers of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong

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and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food — stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine — there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced as that narrow point of feeble green.” Words and sentences are all plain and simple and clear. Perhaps we pause a moment at “scented citron” for the citron as we know it is a vine bearing a melon-like fruit and we are not aware that it is especially fragrant. But this is another plant — a tree that bears a sweet-scented fruit not unlike the lemon. “Burdened vine” seems a trifle obscure — why *burdened* vine? A vine carrying a weight? What weight? The ripened clusters of purple fruit bending the swaying vines to the warm earth while autumn tints the leaves to harmonious colors. “Burdened vine” is a suggestive expression indeed to the person of a little imagination who has walked through the long aisles of a thriving vineyard. Is the passage now clear to us and perfectly understood? Does it convey to us what Ruskin really thought? — “Tomorrow to be cast into the oven.” What a strange expression! Do we put grass into an oven? How came Ruskin to mention such a thing? “To be cast into the oven.” We have seen “burdened vines” and we understand the “scented citron” but what of this grass “cast into the oven”? Back in the mind of the artist-critic lie the lessons of his childhood when an

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ambitious father and a strict mother intended him for the church and trained him carefully to a close and accurate knowledge of the scriptures. So when he writes of the grass of the field he almost unconsciously uses the language of the bible: "Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" We his readers interpret his feelings and his meaning in this, only as we have learned the same lessons.

Examples of such allusions abound throughout literature. In *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, Lowell says :—

"Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not."

With a knowledge of geography we might locate the mountain and understand the sentence, but the tremendous power of the lines can never be felt unless we know the story of Moses and so realize that we stand every day like the patriarch of old in the very presence of God himself.

The mythology of Greece and Rome furnishes to English Literature allusions so pointed, so vivid, and so full of beautiful suggestion that a knowledge of the myths is necessary to any real culture. Modern writers do not make such ready use of them as did the older schools, but Lowell and Tennyson, Browning and Arnold, and a host

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of minor writers assume that their readers know as their alphabet the stories of mythology. In his hymn *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, Milton has this stanza following one which tells that the shepherds heard the sweet music, —

“Nature that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.”

How little of intelligent interest attaches to the first three lines if one has no knowledge beyond the literal meaning of the phrases. “The hollow round of Cynthia's seat” has beauty for that person only who knows something of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy and of the huntress-queen of Greek mythology.

Allusions lead one to every department of knowledge and are the result of the early training and experience of the author. No one needs to be told that Milton studied the classics, that Ruskin and Tennyson read the bible devotedly, that Shakespeare passed his early life in the country. The unconscious trend of their thought as shown by their allusions gives that information most distinctly. If a man loves history in his youth his

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writings will be filled with historical allusions; if he is a devotee of science one will find the phenomena of nature the source of his illustrations. The reader must be ready to understand and feelingly interpret these allusions no matter what the particular bent of the author. To the student the allusion is often very difficult of comprehension, for if it comes in the way of an ingenious paraphrase he may pass over it without the slightest recognition. When it is direct, a dictionary or other reference book will frequently make it sufficiently clear.

BASIS OF FIGURES.—The allusion is but one of many ways in which an author varies the literal meaning of his sentences and gives more than force or beauty to his statements. There are a large number of different figures of speech but such fine distinctions as the rhetoricians make are unnecessary for the ordinary student of literature. It is the meaning the figures convey that concerns us, for an adept in reading always notices the skillful use of figures and his pleasure is heightened by their delicacy and beauty.

In the study of figures one must first carefully determine the basis in reality or the literal meaning and then the figurative or applied meaning. Browning speaks of—

“—selfish worthless human slugs whose slime
Has failed to lubricate their path in life.”

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Here the reader must see disgusting slugs or snails crawling lazily across the ripening apples in the orchard and leaving behind them the filthy streak of slime with which they made the way easy for their ugly bodies, but in so doing defiled the fruit for human use. So much is the basis in fact. Knowing this one can feel the poet's stinging denunciation of the one who cast the beautiful girl in the way of the heartless Guido instead of "putting a prompt foot on him the worthless human slug."

"To unhusk truth a-hiding in its hulls."

Here Browning has gone to the fields for his figure and we shall see the ripened grain, the corn or the wheat, the merry huskers at work upon it, turning out the glowing ear from its covering of dim paper wraps; or perchance a group of disciples walking with their Master and rubbing the hulls from the wheat gathered on the Sabbath day. Whatever the scene that comes in mind, one fact there is,—underneath the dried and worthless hulls lies the living and life-giving grain. So we find truth bright and genuine when we have torn from it the coverings with which it has been concealed.

Such practice as this in working out elaborately the figure often given in barest hint, strengthens the imagination and gives to thought the versatility that makes reading a delight

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and an inspiration. Till the imagination is furnished material and given freedom, literature is as worthless as the husks.

SIMILE.—As we learn to know one thing from its likeness to another, it is natural that the writer should seek to make impressions vivid by comparison with better known things. Sometimes these comparisons are expressed in words and one thing is said to be *like* another, while at other times the comparison is left to be inferred and one thing is said *to be* another. The *simile* states the likeness. Browning seeks to make us see vividly the hideous character of one of his villains and says that on his very face you could read his crimes—

“Large-lettered like Hell’s masterpiece of print.”

The comparison “like Hell’s masterpiece” is a simile.

Turn to Part One and find five similes in *The Ancient Mariner*. Find as many more in *Enoch Arden*. Find two in each of the prose tales. Study each simile carefully, and state the exact meaning of each literally. Compare your statement with the figurative one and see if the latter is clearer, more forcible, or more beautiful. If any one of the similes seems less vivid than your own literal statement, ask yourself if the fault is your own in that you are not thoroughly familiar

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with the basis of the figure. Watch for similes in your reading and give them critical thought when you have found them. It is not necessary that your judgment should be unassailable. The value of the proceeding lies in the exercise of your attention and reason. Your judgments will improve, your appreciation grow keener and more delicate.

METAPHOR.—

“Everywhere
I see in the world the intellect of man,
That sword, the energy, his subtle spear,
The knowledge, which defends him like a shield.”

Here is another quotation from Browning in which he says intellect is a sword and energy a spear thereby assuming a comparison and using the figure *metaphor* while in the last line he uses the simile “like a shield.” Ingersoll calls the grave “the windowless palace of rest” and Whittier refers to it in a beautiful metaphor as “the low green tent whose curtain never outward swings.”

Now return to the selections in Part One and find ten good metaphors, remembering the distinction between metaphor and simile. “The Lord is my shepherd” is a metaphor; “The Lord is like a shepherd” is a simile. When you have found your ten metaphors, reconstruct the sentences in which they occur, expressing the idea in similes. When

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this is done, change them again, this time into literal language.

SYNECDOCHE AND METONYMY.—Another group of figures is based upon the relation of one thing to another as of a part to a whole. When Browning says “pert tongue and idle ear consort ’neath the archway” he conveys the idea that idle gossips gather beneath the archway and with sharp tongues talk over the failings of their neighbors. This figure wherein he uses the ear and the tongue, parts of the body, to signify the person is called *synecdoche*. When the figure consists of an interchange of correlative terms it is called *metonymy*. Within the space of a few lines we can find Browning using these expressions, “naked truth;” “hobbling bedward,” to indicate an old man nearing death; “I could spill this overplus of my life,” meaning that he could die. Each of these is a metonymy and gives brilliancy of meaning by the use of a term usually applied to something else. The figure lies in the use of the words “naked,” “bedward,” and “spill.”

Our everyday language is full of these figures. We speak of owning “twenty head” of cattle, of hiring “ten hands,” of seeing “fifteen sails.” We mean that we own twenty cattle, that we hire ten men, that we see fifteen boats. By synecdoche we have used the name of a part of an object to represent the whole. The metonymy is frequently in use by the ignorant who have few

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words to express their meaning. In this way we may imagine a cowboy calling a stranger from the eastern states a "shorthorn" and a British horseman in Bombay might call an Australian visitor a "waler."

Search for examples of these two figures in the selections of Part One. Both are elusive and at first you are apt to pass over many without noticing them. As you continue your search and grow keen in it you will be surprised to see how common they are, both in what you read and in your own speech.

APOSTROPHE AND PERSONIFICATION.—A direct address to a person or thing is called an *apostrophe*, and when an inanimate object is assumed to be alive or an animate object is assumed to be raised to a higher plane of existence it is said to be by *personification*. Examples of the latter figure culled from the same source are "death's menace," "laugh of morn." In the line "Lucidity of soul unlocks the lips" are both metonymy and personification. In the same poem that has furnished us so many illustrations is the beautiful apostrophe beginning —

"O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,

Mastery of Thought

Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their
 blue
And bared them of the glory — to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice; can thy soul know
 change? ”

Another fine example is found in Whittier's *Snow Bound*, the lyric which we print in another place and which begins,—

“ O Time and Change.”

“ Roll on, thou dark and deep blue ocean, roll ”
is the beginning of a grand apostrophe by Lord Byron.

We have considered the most common and expressive figures, and if one accustoms himself to the recognition of these and an explanation of their meaning as has been indicated here, he will soon recognize others of more complex type. Mere classification is valueless ; our purpose is to learn to see and to feel more clearly and more deeply by means of our intelligent grasp upon these figurative expressions.

Thought, then, is mastered by attention to the details we have discussed and until we habitually notice these things our reading is apt to be slipshod and profitless. It will help to retain these

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facts in mind if we put them into a systematic outline.

Mastery of thought, which is at the foundation of an appreciation of literature, depends upon mastery of —

- I. Words in their special meaning.
- II. Allusions, or references to
 1. Historical events and personages.
 2. Literary masterpieces.
 3. Scientific truths.
 4. Biblical events and principles.
 5. Mythological creations.
- III. Figures, of which the more important and common are those —
 1. Based on comparisons.
 - a. simile.
 - b. metaphor.
 2. Based on relations.
 - a. synecdoche.
 - b. metonymy.
 3. Of apostrophe.
 4. Of personification.
- IV. Sentences, the units of thought.
- V. Paragraphs, the collections of related thought units.

Essays

The Crown of Wild Olive

Twenty years ago there was no lovelier piece of lowland scenery in South England, nor any more pathetic in the world, by its expression of sweet human character and life, than that immediately bordering on the sources of the Wandle, and including the lower moors of Addington, and the villages of Beddington and Carshalton, with all their pools and streams. No clearer or diviner waters ever sang with constant lips of the hand which “giveth rain from heaven;” no pastures ever lightened in spring-time with more passionate blossoming; no sweeter homes ever hallowed the heart of the passer-by with their pride of peaceful gladness — fain-hidden¹ — yet full-confessed.¹ The place remains, or, until a few months ago, remained nearly unchanged in its larger features; but, with deliberate mind, I say that I have never seen anything so ghastly in

NOTE. — This selection is the preface to a series of three lectures published about 1866. They are upon *Work, Traffic, and War*, and were delivered at different times before Englishmen of the working classes. In a later edition Ruskin says this preface “was written very carefully to be read, not spoken.”

1. Compounds fashioned by Ruskin himself.

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its inner tragic meaning,—not in Pisan Marmemma,²—not by Campagna³ tomb,—not by the sand-isles of the Torcellan⁴ shore,—as the slow stealing of aspects of reckless, indolent, animal neglect, over the delicate sweetness of that English scene; nor is any blasphemy or impiety—any frantic saying or godless thought—more appalling to me, using the best power of judgment I have to discern its sense and scope, than the insolent defilings of those springs by the human herds that drink of them. Just where the welling of stainless water, trembling and pure, like a body of light, enters the pool of Carshalton, cutting itself a radiant channel down to the gravel, through warp of feathery weeds, all waving, which it traverses with its deep threads of clearness, like the chalcedony in moss-agate, starred here and there with white grenouillette;⁵ just in the very rush and murmur of the first spreading currents, the human wretches of the place cast their street and house foul-

2. Marshy regions near Pisa, Italy.

3. Fertile but malarial provinces about Rome. Formerly highly cultivated and densely populated but now largely desolate and dotted with decaying ruins.

4. Torcello is a small island near Venice, once of considerable importance but now quite deserted.

5. The French name of the frog-bit, a floating aquatic with round-kidney-form leaves and white flowers.

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ness; heaps of dust and slime, and broken shreds of old metal, and rags of putrid clothes; they having neither energy to cart it away, nor decency enough to dig it into the ground, thus shed into the stream, to diffuse what venom of it will float and melt, far away, in all places where God meant those waters to bring joy and health. And, in a little pool, behind some houses farther in the village, where another spring rises, the shattered stones of the well, and of the little fretted channel which was long ago built and traced for it by gentler hands, lie scattered, each from each, under a ragged bank of mortar and scoria; and brick-layers' refuse on one side, which the clean water nevertheless chastises to purity; but it can not conquer the dead earth beyond; and there, circled and coiled under festering scum, the stagnant edge of the pool effaces itself into a slope of black slime, the accumulation of indolent years. Half a dozen men, with one day's work, could cleanse those pools, and trim the flowers about their banks, and make every breath of summer air above them rich with cool balm; and every glittering wave medicinal, as if it ran, troubled of angels, from the porch of

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Bethesda.⁶ But that day's work is never given, nor will be; nor will any joy be possible to heart of man forevermore about those wells of English waters.

When I last left them, I walked up slowly through the back streets of Croydon, from the old church to the hospital; and just to the left, before coming up to the crossing of the High Street, there was a new public-house built. And the front of it was built in so wise a manner, that a recess of two feet was left below its front windows, between them and the street pavement — a recess too narrow for any possible use (for even if it had been occupied by a seat, as in old time it might have been, everybody walking along the street would have fallen over the legs of the reposing wayfarers). But, by way of making this two-feet depth of freehold land more expressive of the dignity of an establishment for the sale of spirituous liquors, it was fenced from the pavement by an imposing iron railing, having four or five spear-heads to the yard of it, and six feet high; containing as much iron and iron-work, indeed, as could well be put into the space; and by this stately arrangement the little

6. John v, 2-15.

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piece of dead ground within, between wall and street, became a protective receptacle of refuse; cigar-ends and oyster-shells, and the like, such as an open-handed English street populace habitually scatters from its presence, and was thus left unsweepable by any ordinary methods. Now the iron bars which, uselessly (or in great degree worse than uselessly), enclosed this bit of ground, and made it pestilent, represented a quantity of work which would have cleansed the Carshalton pools three times over—of work, partly cramped and deadly, in the mine; partly fierce* and exhaustive, at the furnace; partly foolish and sedentary, of ill-taught students making bad designs; work from the beginning to the last fruits of it, and in all the branches of it, venomous, deathful and miserable. Now, how did

* "A fearful occurrence took place a few days since near Wolverhampton. Thomas Snape, aged nineteen, was on duty as the 'keeper' of a blast furnace at Deepfield, assisted by John Gardner, aged eighteen, and Joseph Swift, aged thirty-seven. The furnace contained four tons of molten iron and an equal amount of cinders, and ought to have been run out at 7:30 P. M. But Snape and his mates engaged in talking and drinking, neglected their duty, and in the meantime the iron rose in the furnace until it reached a pipe wherein water was contained. Just as the men had stripped, and were proceeding to tap the furnace, the water in the pipe, converted into steam, burst down its front and let loose on them the molten metal, which instantaneously consumed Gardner; Snape, terribly burnt and mad with pain, leaped into the canal, and then ran home and fell dead on the threshold; Swift survived to reach the hospital, where he died too."

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it come to pass that this work was done instead of the other; that the strength and life of the English operative were spent in defiling ground, instead of redeeming it, and in producing an entirely (in that place) valueless piece of metal, which can neither be eaten nor breathed, instead of medicinal fresh air and pure water?

There is but one reason for it, and at present a conclusive one — that the capitalist can charge percentage on the work in the one case, and can not in the other. If, having certain funds for supporting labor at my disposal, I pay men merely to keep my ground in order, my money is in that function spent once for all; but if I pay them to dig iron out of my ground, and work it and sell it, I can charge rent for the ground and percentage both on the manufacture and the sale, and make my capital profitable in these three by-ways. The greater part of the profitable investment of capital in the present day is in the operations of this kind, in which the public is persuaded to buy something of no use to it, on production or sale of which the capitalist may charge percentage; the said public remaining all the while under the persuasion that the percentages thus obtained are real national gains, whereas they are merely filchings out of partially light pockets to swell heavy ones.

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Thus the Croydon publican buys the iron railing to make himself more conspicuous to drunkards. The public housekeeper on the other side of the way presently buys another railing, to out-rail him with. Both are, as to their *relative* attractiveness to customers of taste, just where they were before; but they have lost the price of the railings, which they must either themselves finally lose, or make their aforesaid customers of taste pay by raising the price of their beer, or adulterating it. Either the publicans or their customers are thus poorer by precisely what the capitalist has gained, and the value of the work itself, meantime, has been lost to the nation; the iron bars in that form and place being wholly useless. It is this mode of taxation of the poor by the rich which is referred to in the text in comparing the modern acquisitive power of capital with that of the lance and sword, the only difference being that the levy of blackmail in old times was by force, and is now by cozening. The old rider⁷ and reiver⁸ frankly quartered himself on the publican for the night; the modern one merely makes his lance into an iron spike, and persuades his host to buy it.

7. Robber — highwayman.

8. Reaver — robber.

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One comes as an open robber, the other as a cheating peddler, but the result to the injured person's pocket is absolutely the same. Of course many useful industries mingle with and disguise the useless ones; and in the habits of energy aroused by the struggle there is a certain direct good. It is far better to spend four thousand pounds in making a good gun, and then to blow it to pieces, than to pass life in idleness. Only do not let it be called "political economy." There is also a confused notion in the minds of many persons that the gathering of the property of the poor into the hands of the rich does no ultimate harm, since, in whosoever hands it may be, it must be spent at last, and thus, they think, return to the poor again. This fallacy has been again and again exposed; but grant the plea true, and the same apology may, of course, be made for blackmail, or any other form of robbery. It might be (though practically it never is) as advantageous for the nation that the robber should have the spending of the money he extorts as that the person robbed should have spent it. But this is no excuse for the theft. If I were to put a turnpike on the road where it passes my own gate and endeavor to exact a shilling from every passenger, the public

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would soon do away with my gate, without listening to any plea on my part that "it was as advantageous to them in the end that I should spend their shillings as that they themselves should." But if, instead of outfacing them with a turnpike, I can only persuade them to come in and buy stones, or old iron, or any other useless thing, out of my ground, I may rob them to the same extent, and be, moreover, thanked as a public benefactor and promoter of commercial prosperity. And this main question for the poor of England — for the poor of all countries — is wholly omitted in every common treatise on the subject of wealth. Even by the laborers themselves the operation of capital is regarded only in its effect on their immediate interests, never in the far more terrific power of its appointment of the kind and the object of labor. It matters little ultimately how much a laborer is paid for making anything; but it matters fearfully what the thing is which he is compelled to make. If his labor is so ordered as to produce food and fresh air and fresh water, no matter that his wages be low — the food and fresh air and water will be at last there, and he will at last get them. But if he is paid to destroy food and fresh air, or to produce iron bars instead of them — the food

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and air will finally *not* be there, and he will *not* get them, to his great and final inconvenience. So that, conclusively, in political as in household economy, the great question is not so much what money you have in your pocket, as what you will buy with it and do with it.

I have been long accustomed, as all men engaged in work of investigation must be, to hear my statements laughed at for years before they are examined or believed, and I am generally content to wait the public's time. But it has not been without displeased surprise that I have found myself totally unable as yet, by any repetition or illustration, to force this plain thought into my readers' heads—that the wealth of nations, as of men, consists in substance, not in ciphers, and that the real good of all work and of all commerce depends on the final worth of the thing you make or get by it. This is a practical enough statement, one would think; but the English public has been so possessed by its modern school of economists with the notion that *business* is always good, whether it be busy in mischief or in benefit; and that buying and selling are always salutary, whatever the intrinsic worth of what you buy or sell — that it seems impossible to

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gain so much as a patient hearing for any inquiry respecting the substantial result of our eager modern labors. I have never felt more checked by the sense of this impossibility than in arranging the heads of the following three lectures,⁹ which, though delivered at considerable intervals of time and in different places, were not prepared without reference to each other. Their connection would, however, have been made far more distinct if I had not been prevented, by what I feel to be another great difficulty in addressing English audiences, from enforcing with any decision the common, and to me the most important, part of their subjects. I chiefly desired (as I have just said) to question my hearers—operatives, merchants, and soldiers—as to the ultimate meaning of the *business* they had in hand, and to know from them what they expected or intended their manufacture to come to, their selling to come to, and their killing to come to. That appeared the first point needing determination before I could speak to them with any real utility or effect. “You craftsmen, salesmen, swordsmen, do but tell me clearly what you want; then if I can say anything to help you I will, and if not, I will

9. See note at the beginning of the selection.

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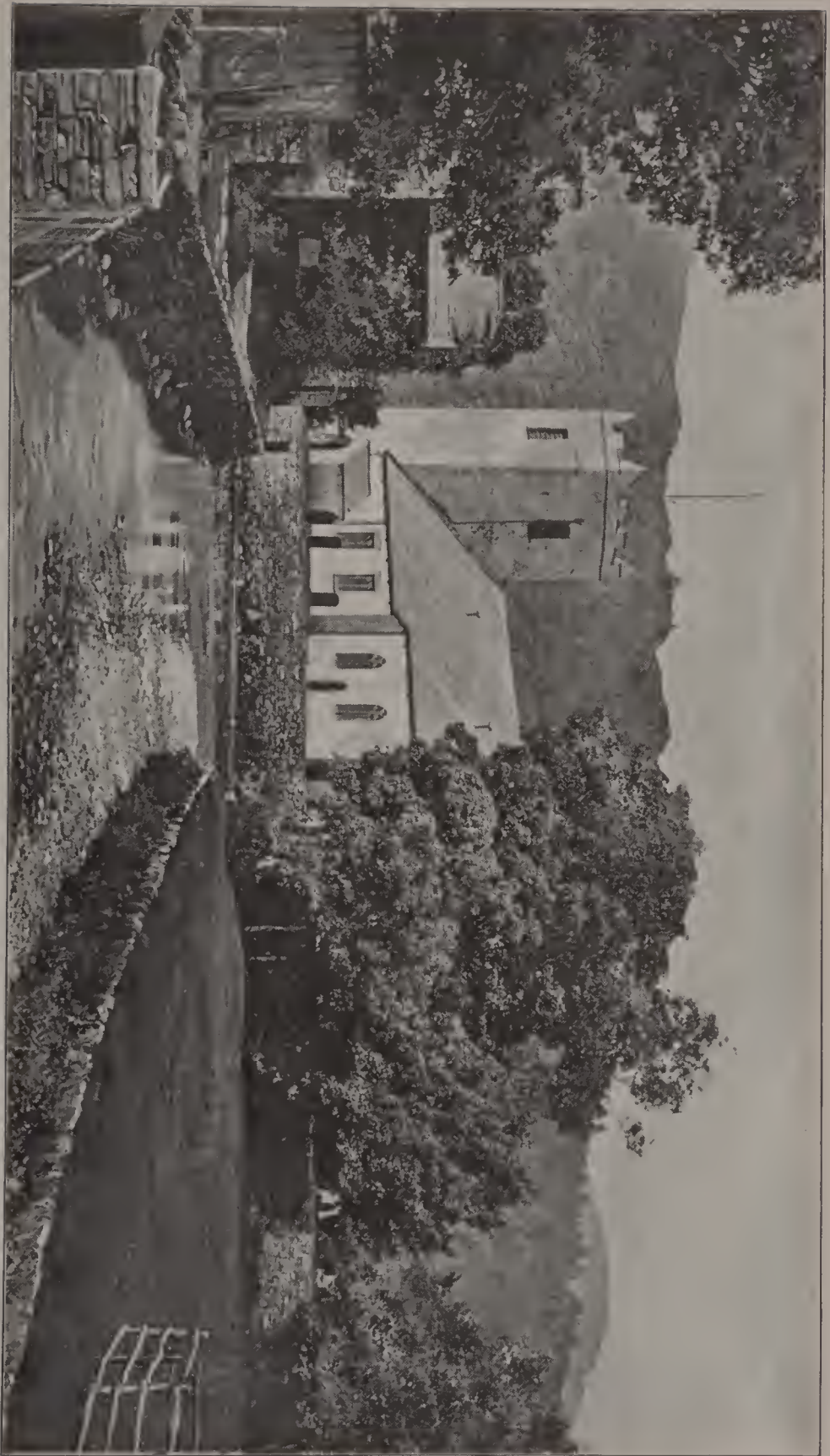
account to you as I best may for my inability." But in order to put this question into any terms, one had first of all to face the difficulty just spoken of—to me for the present insuperable—the difficulty of knowing whether to address one's audience as believing or not believing in any other world than this. For if you address any average modern English company as believing in an eternal life, and endeavor to draw any conclusions from this assumed belief as to their present business, they will forthwith tell you that what you say is very beautiful, but it is not practical. If, on the contrary, you frankly address them as unbelievers in eternal life, and try to draw any consequences from that unbelief, they immediately hold you for an accursed person, and shake off the dust from their feet at you. And the more I thought over what I had got to say, the less I found I could say it, without some reference to this intangible or intractable part of the subject. It made all the difference, in asserting any principle of war, whether one assumed that a discharge of artillery would merely knead down a certain quantity of red clay into a level line, as in a brick field; or whether, out of every separately Christian-named portion of the ruinous

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heap, there went out into the smoke and dead-fallen air of battle some astonished condition of soul, unwillingly released. It made all the difference, in speaking of the possible range of commerce, whether one assumed that all bargains related only to visible property, or whether property, for the present invisible, but nevertheless real, was elsewhere purchasable on other terms. It made all the difference, in addressing a body of men subject to considerable hardship, and having to find some way out of it, whether one could confidently say to them, "My friends, you have only to die and all will be right;" or whether one had any secret misgiving that such advice was more blessed to him that gave than to him that took it. And therefore the deliberate reader will find throughout these lectures a hesitation in driving points home, and a pausing short of conclusions which he will feel I would fain have come to—hesitation which arises wholly from this uncertainty of my hearers' temper. For I do not now speak, nor have I ever spoken, since the time of first forward youth, in any proselyting temper, as desiring to persuade anyone of what in such matters I thought myself; but, whomsoever I venture to address, I take for

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the time his creed as I find it, and endeavor to push it into such vital fruit as it seems capable of. Thus it is a creed with a great part of the existing English people that they are in possession of a book which tells them, straight from the lips of God, all they ought to do and need to know. I have read that book with as much care as most of them for some forty years, and am thankful that, on those who trust it, I can press its pleadings. My endeavor has been uniformly to make them trust it more deeply than they do; trust it, not in their own favorite verses only, but in the sum of all; trust it not as a fetish or talisman, which they are to be saved by daily repetitions of, but as a Captain's order, to be heard and obeyed at their peril. I was always encouraged by supposing my hearers to hold such belief. To these, if to any, I once had hope of addressing, with acceptance, words which insisted on the guilt of pride and the futility of avarice; from these, if from any, I once expected ratification of a political economy, which asserted that the life was more than the meat, and the body than raiment; and these, it once seemed to me, I might ask, without accusation of fanaticism, not merely in doctrine of the lips, but in the bestowal of



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their heart's treasure, to separate themselves from the crowd of whom it is written, "After all these things do the Gentiles seek."

It can not, however, be assumed, with any semblance of reason, that a general audience is now wholly, or even in majority, composed of these religious persons. A large portion must always consist of men who admit no such creed, or who at least are inaccessible to appeals founded on it. And as with the so-called Christian I desired to plead for honest declaration and fulfillment of his belief in life, with the so-called infidel, I desired to plead for an honest declaration and fulfillment of his belief in death. The dilemma is inevitable. Men must either hereafter live or hereafter die; fate may be bravely met and conduct wisely ordered on either expectation, but never in hesitation between ungrasped hope and unfronted fear. We usually believe in immortality, so far as to avoid preparation for death; and in mortality, so far as to avoid preparation for anything after death. Whereas a wise man will at least hold himself prepared for one or other of two events, of which one or other is inevitable, and will have all things in order for his sleep or in readiness for his awakening.

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Nor have we any right to call it an ignoble judgment if he determine to put them in order, as for sleep. A brave belief in life is indeed an enviable state of mind, but, as far as I can discern, an unusual one. I know few Christians so convinced of the splendor of the rooms in their Father's house as to be happier when their friends are called to those mansions, than they would have been if the Queen had sent for them to live at court; nor has the Church's most ardent "desire to depart and be with Christ," ever cured it of the singular habit of putting on mourning for every person summoned to such departure. On the contrary a brave belief in death has been assuredly held by many not ignoble persons, and it is a sign of the last depravity in the Church itself, when it assumes that such a belief is inconsistent with either purity of character or energy of hand. The shortness of life is not to any rational person a conclusive reason for wasting the space of it which may be granted him; nor does the anticipation of death to-morrow suggest to anyone but a drunkard the expediency of drunkenness to-day. To teach that there is no device in the grave may indeed make the deviceless person more contented in

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his dullness; but it will make the deviser only more earnest in devising; nor is human conduct likely in every case to be purer under the conviction that all its evil may in a moment be pardoned, and all its wrong-doing in a moment redeemed, and that the sigh of repentance, which purges the guilt of the past, will waft the soul into a felicity which forgets its pain, than it may be under the sterner, and to many not unwise minds, more probable apprehension, that “what a man soweth that shall he also reap,”—or others reap, — when he, the living seed of pestilence, walketh no more in darkness, but lies down therein.

But to men whose feebleness of sight, or bitterness of soul, or the offense given by the conduct of those who claim higher hope, may have rendered this painful creed the only possible one, there is an appeal to be made, more secure in its ground than any which can be addressed to happier persons. I would fain, if I might offenselessly, have spoken to them as if none others heard, and have said thus: Hear me, you dying men, who will soon be dead forever. For these others at your right hand and your left, who look forward to a state of infinite existence, in which all their errors will be overruled and all their

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faults forgiven; for these who, stained and blackened in the battle-smoke of mortality, have but to dip themselves for an instant in the font of death, and to rise renewed of plumage, as a dove that is covered with silver and her feathers like gold; for these, indeed, it may be permissible to waste their numbered moments, through faith in a future of innumerable hours; to these, in their weakness, it may be conceded that they should tamper with sin which can only bring forth fruit of righteousness, and profit by the iniquity which one day will be remembered no more. In them it may be no sign of hardness of heart to neglect the poor, over whom they know their Master is watching, and to leave those to perish temporarily who cannot perish eternally.

But for you there is no such hope, and therefore no such excuse. This fate, which you ordain for the wretched, you believe to be all their inheritance; you may crush them, before the moth, and they will never rise to rebuke you; their breath, which fails for lack of food, once expiring, will never be recalled to whisper against you a word of accusing; they and you, as you think, shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms cover you,

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and for them there shall be no consolation, and on you no vengeance — only the question murmured above your grave: “Who shall repay him what he hath done?” Is it therefore easier for you in your heart to inflict the sorrow for which there is no remedy? Will you take wantonly this little all of his life from your poor brother, and make his brief hours long to him with pain? Will you be readier to the injustice which can never be redressed, and niggardly of mercy which you *can* bestow but once, and which, refusing, you refuse forever? I think better of you, even of the most selfish, than that you would do this, well understood.

And for yourselves, it seems to me, the question becomes not less grave in these curt limits. If your life were but a fever fit,— the madness of a night, whose follies were all to be forgotten in the dawn, it might matter little how you fretted away the sickly hours, — what toys you snatched at or let fall, what visions you followed wistfully with the deceived eyes of sleepless frenzy. Is the earth only an hospital? Play, if you care to play, on the floor of the hospital dens. Knit its straw into what crowns please you; gather the dust of it for treasure, and die rich in that,

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clutching at the black motes in the air with your dying hands, and yet it may be well with you. But if this life be no dream and the world no hospital,—if all the peace and power and joy you can ever win must be won now, and all fruit of victory gathered here or never,—will you still, throughout the puny totality of your life, weary yourselves in the fire for vanity? If there is no rest which remaineth for you, is there none you might presently take? Was this grass of the earth made green for your shroud only, not for your bed? And can you never lie down *upon* it, but only *under* it? The heathen, to whose creed you have returned, thought not so. They knew that life brought its contests; but they expected from it also the crown of all contest: no proud one! no jeweled circlet flaming through Heaven above the height of the unmerited throne; only some few leaves of wild olive, cool to the tired brow, through a few years of peace. It should have been of gold, they thought; but Jupiter was poor; this was the best the god could give them. Seeking a greater than this, they had known it a mockery. Not in war, not in wealth, nor in tyranny, was there any happiness to be found for them—only in kindly peace, fruitful and

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free. The wreath was to be of *wild* olive, mark you, — the tree that grows carelessly, tufting the rocks with no vivid bloom, no verdure of branch, — only with soft snow of blossom, and scarcely fulfilled fruit, mixed with gray leaf and thorn-set stem; no fastening of diadem for you but with such sharp embroidery! But this, such as it is, you may win while yet you live; type of gray honor and sweet rest. Free-heartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry to their pain — these and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath, and mysteries and presences, innumerable, of living things — these may yet be here your riches, untormenting and divine: serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come.

Study of Crown of Wild Olive

Study of Crown of Wild Olive

Make a topical analysis of the principles that Ruskin would have his readers realize. Do these principles follow from logical arguments that are convincing, or does he assume the truth of his propositions and merely urge their adoption? Are you convinced that his suggestions are worthy of being carried out? Are you convinced because your reason tells you he is right, or because he has wrought upon your feelings by the fervor of his own emotions and the beauty of his expression? Are you convinced of the sincerity of his purpose?

Can you find sentences that upon being read aloud strike your ear as musical? Do you think he has ever been guided in his selection of words by their sound? Does he try to ornament his sentences by figures of speech? What seems to be his favorite figure?

Can you find passages which seem a direct appeal to your emotions? Does he give any incidents or illustrations which strongly affect your feelings?

Do you find any passages which are so beautiful that you would like to commit them to memory? Write a brief, connected, and logical statement of the thought in Ruskin's essay.

John Ruskin



John Ruskin

1819-1900

As an art critic and social reformer the fame of John Ruskin is secure, and as a writer he will always find admirers for his vigorous and eloquent prose. His father was a wealthy wine merchant in London, and his mother an enthusiastic and devoted Christian. The boy was intended for the church, and much of his early education was based upon a minute and exacting study of the bible. He graduated from Christ College, Oxford, where he won a prize for a poem. He studied painting and became much impressed with Turner's work. To defend this artist he wrote his first volume of *Modern Painters*, which at once attracted great attention for its brilliancy of style and striking originality. At different times Cambridge and Oxford both honored him with professorships and he lectured at those universities for many years. It was as a social reformer, a political economist, however, that his positive ideas and enthusiastic utterances made the greatest impression. He labored to improve the condition of the poor and some of his most stirring eloquence is found in his addresses to workingmen. The large fortune left him by his father he expended in public and private beneficence not infrequently at the expense of his own comfort and ease. The last fifteen years of his life he lived at his private

John Ruskin

estate of Brantwood at Coniston in the beautiful Lake Region.

Among his voluminous writings perhaps the most popular is *Sesame and Lilies*. The lectures to which *The Crown of Wild Olive* is introductory are fine examples of his power as a lecturer, and his autobiography, which he called *Præterita*, is an interesting work.

Dec 17 1901

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